Informant: LMP-S4
Date: 7-29-02
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CH: You mentioned seven spirits and said that you used two in particular. Could you tell me a little bit more about the ones that you use in particular?

S4: Mostly that would be Red Skin Indian, an American Indian spirit and the second one that I use [is] an Aztec spirit, Indian Seven Feathers.

CH: How did you find out about Red Skin Indian?

S4: I channeled that spirit through me and when I awoke from the trance I was told what his name was and how I was supposed to invoke him or call upon to do what types of work. So, he basically came through me and channeled through my body and spoke about who he was and what he did and how he can help people. And the same goes for the other spirit; he also was channeled through me.

CH: Was this during a ceremony?

S4: It was during a spiritual session; a séance-type of session.

CH: So it wasn't intentional?

S4: No, no, not at all. Both sessions weren't for me either. They were for two other people. But when you're in a séance anything can happen with anyone who's participating in it so it wasn't meant for me but these spirits did channel through me on two occasions.

CH: I've been to a séance. The man that held it called it a "misa." Is that what you call it in Spanish?

S4: In Spanish we call it a misa or mass because of all the catholic prayers that we use.

CH: I was gonna ask you that. Would it be okay to describe how you get that started? How you begin to call upon the spirits or open the space for the spirits?

S4: In a séance setting you just basically relax your body like if you were gonna see a psychiatrist or psychologist where he's asking you to sit comfortably and try to put your mind in a state of blankness and not think about anything or anyone unless you're instructed to do so by the person that's doing the ceremony. Or if it was in psychiatry the questions you were gonna be asked. It's a type of relaxation, physical and mental and once that is achieved, basically, you just let anything come through you [or] channel through you [to the point] where you start having sensations or thoughts or feelings about

a person next to you. And then you would speak about what you're feeling about such an individual or if you see something for that person, you would again also just say what you feel or see for yourself or someone else.

CH: So you were not the one who was leading the séance?

S4: No, no, not at all. I was participating in it for the benefit of another woman that had a spiritual problem. But in a séance anyone can channel the spirits, it's just the environment, the correct environment, for that to happen with whoever is there present.

CH: For example, if I was at a séance and I've never channeled a spirit before, and I'm not an Espiritista, let's say I'm a first timer going to a misa, would it be possible for a spirit to come down on me.

S4: Yes, very possible.

CH: How often does something like that happen?

S4: It's normal actually. Especially when someone has a spirit put on them to cause harm or mischief in their life. We conduct the séance to basically have him come out of the person's body and identify himself and usually he or she will channel through the victim of the spell or the victim of the poltergeist, or whatever problems. She or he is confronted. In a séance that spirit will accompany the individual.

CH: How long have you been working with Red Skin Indian?

S4: Eleven years.

CH: How is it that you invoke him now that you know to work with him?

S4: Usually what I do is I pray seven "Our Fathers," I pray seven "Hail Mary's" and just basically close my eyes. I clean myself with Florida water or any other type of spiritual cologne [in] the back of my neck, my forehead, my arms, my chest and just sit in front of my altar and just glance at one particular glass of water and then just call upon him. He'll manifest himself through the glass of water and I'll get thoughts put into my head from him. If I need him to be in a spiritual session that's where I have a hard time having him. Usually he'll channel through you whenever he deems it necessary not when I want him to actually come through me. It's been very rare where I was able to actually make him or coerce him into channeling through me. Usually [he descends] when I least expect it or when I'm not thinking of him coming to the session [or] séance.

CH: How often do you use him and for what?

S4: Usually to help people rid themselves of something very evil like a curse or [with] problems with other individuals that are not spiritually related such as legal matters, or enemies, or just conflicts at work and conflicts in the family. Basically, [for] anything

that involves doing aggressive work against someone--to have them leave you alone, to have them leave, to have them stop saying something against you. You just basically have somebody just leave you alone [and] just get away from you. Or [to] have something negative or evil rid [from] your house or business or yourself.

CH: So, let's say I was a customer who came in and had a legal problem, how would you decide to use him as opposed to do anything else?

S4: I would ask him first. I would confront him with the person's situation and he would tell me whether or not it's something that he can work with or not. Then he would indicate me [on] what steps to take.

CH: So if he decides that he can work with you on that, do you begin that meditation and self-cleansing and prayers with the patient present, or do you have to do it yourself?

S4: I would do it with the client if the situation was such that the person had something on them physically; if their spirit was being somehow cursed or hexed or damaged or there was a possibility that [the] person let's say, [was] going to jail or something had to be done to themselves physically. Then I would have to do that (cleanse himself, etc.,) to channel him to have him do something on the person's body like cleanse him with everything from fire to gunpowder, to just herbs and incense or his hands.

Other situations that involve using names of people or photographs or addresses and stuff like that then I would just ask him specifically what offerings he needs to have him be able to go towards [or] against that person and do what ever he's gotta do for the client.

CH: Can you describe a recent example; the last case of when you used him?

S4: The last case I used him [in] was last year. I haven't really used him this year because he hasn't been wanting to do certain works for certain people. So, I've supplemented him with other spirits for other situations. But, last year he did have to help somebody solve some issues with court. [S]he had issues with child support. [S]he couldn't get her husband to pay back-child support and child support in the present and there were some racial issues because he was Anglo and she's Hispanic. And she was having such a hard time getting the court to actually do anything about it and she was also going to inland courts which were all, again, Caucasian or Anglo. So, everything was just against her totally. Even attorneys that she was trying to hire didn't really help her any. So that wasn't anything spiritual; it was all just her fate and her luck with legal matters. The spirit did have to be channeled to cleanse her. He gave her his energy and then the spirit had to work against the delinquent parent, and at the end she was able to garnish his wages and do things that she couldn't do legally on her own for a couple of years before [Red Skin's intervention]. She [had been] at a complete stand still. She couldn't act against him in any way.

CH: So the spirit intervened?

S4: [He] intervened and she was able to collect back child support of, I think it was $30 or $40, 000 plus have him pay monthly because he was hiding a business that he had. She couldn't get anyone to actually intervene, not even her paying an attorney to do so. Everything was in his favor and against hers. Somehow her luck was just against all that.

CH: So then, you had to do cleansing for her?

S4: [The cleansings were] For her and to basically impose so much energy in her [that] when she went into these court buildings, they would actually pay her attention and help her. There was once an incident where she filed twice and her paperwork wasn't filed. She had receipts [of her] filing fees, costs [and] copies of everything she filed and they were never put into the computer database. She actually didn't exist like actually having filed anything. So, a lot of things were completely against her.

CH: How long did you have to continue this process?

S4: It must have been about a month or so, but it was maybe a weekly thing; I think at first she did have to be here three days because, depending on the problem, the spirit would tell you how to do certain things like be here three days in a row or be here once a week or be here every Friday, do this and take that.

CH: Now, how is she? Is she doing well?

S4: She's doing well. It's been a year and again, she's recuperated all these back taxes and she's getting her monthly dues every month.

CH: Okay. So, do you know any biographical information on Red Skin Indian?

S4: Red Skin; I know he's Native to the Cherokee tribe from his own speaking, from himself talking. He was a Cherokee Indian. And I know he was, they didn't write down the exact date of his birth, I just remember he died in 1807. That's the only thing I remember. But he did give us the year of his birth. He didn't know the month or day of his birth; he just knew the year.

CH: So, this is information he told you?

S4: He himself.

CH: He spoke through you?

S4: Right. And many spirits will do that. They'll tell you when they were born and when they died. They'll tell you usually if they were married, single, if they had children, basically what their livelihood was.

CH: Did he say anything else about his livelihood?

S4: That he had many wives. That he had, I think, between five and seven wives. I forget how many. And that he was a warrior; he wasn't a gatherer or farmer. He was just like a soldier, I guess, of his tribe.

CH: Did he describe how he died by chance?

S4: In a battle. But it was against other Indians; it wasn't against soldiers or anything. It was just against other Indians. It must have been territorial wars. But it was in battle against other Indians.

CH: Do you know if he's come through any other healers? Any of your friends?

S4: No, not so far.

CH: Do you know if he's a popular Indian that other Espiritistas [use]?

S4: I've heard of him in Mexico but he's never channeled himself in a way where he would say what tribe he's from or he'll say when he died or when he was born to [allow us] to be able to determine if it's the same Indian. But usually in Mexico I've heard of him but just known as Indian Red Skin, but not with any other supporting details to know if it's him or it's not him.

CH: What about the Aztec, Indian Seven Feathers?

S4: He's never given information as to wives, children, date of birth, when he passed or anything. But he does speak Spanish so that gives me some indication that he isn't such a very, very old Indian. I mean, if he would have come in speaking the Aztec dialect then we would know that he was definitely after the Spanish colonization. The only thing he would discuss as far as his trade is that he was a sorcerer, that he was a shaman or curandero.

CH: What about Red Skin? Did he speak English or Spanish?

S4: He spoke Spanish and then he would speak English sometimes. So, that's where we have a misunderstanding, not a misunderstanding, but some type of a correct understanding that he speaks a number of other languages. And when he would clean some people, but not all, he would also chant or pray in a different language that wasn't Spanish or English. So, we're just thinking that he's managing languages, as he knows people will understand him. So, he does have some type of a, I'm guessing, a higher level, spiritually, to be able to communicate with people in their own languages. The Aztec Indian, he speaks, sometimes, in his native tongue but it'll be a couple of phrases or sentences when he's first coming, channeling through the body, or when he's leaving or when he's doing something special in particular. After that he'll speak Spanish and he's never spoken any English.

CH: What do you use Seven Feathers for?

S4: Heal people usually. Mainly heal people. And when you're trying to use him to give protection to someone he'll usually protect people but he isn't a warrior type Indian so he really won't go against anyone, he'll just protect people; protect them from harm and from evil, witchcraft and stuff like that or just heal them from other ailments or spiritual problems.

CH: How do you call upon him? In the same way that you do with Red Skin?

S4: In the same manner, the seven Our Father's, the seven Hail Mary's and before that cleansing yourself from negative energies and just concentrating on that one particular name.

CH: How long have you worked with him?

S4: with him it was the same year that I had Red Skin channeled. He channeled, I believe, in the same session.

CH: So, about eleven years knowing him as well?

S4: Approximately eleven.

CH: Have you used him recently?

S4: Recently, to help people yes, but I haven't channeled him either. I haven't channeled any spirits this year actually.

CH: Can you describe one of the cases in which you used him?

S4: With him, usually I dream him a lot. He's usually a spirit that will come to me in dreams a whole lot. And he's just been giving me tips and information on a number of cases in all fields of work. There's been love issues where he's told me, "well this person is really not faithful to this person, let this person know" or he's told me, "ask so and so [to] do this behind their door in their business for prosperity." He'll just give me information in dreams and it's been a wide span of matters whether it's luck, love, protection, healing, just in all matters. He's been giving me information in dreams about cases that I'm already working on or new cases that have just gotten to me.

CH: So, he might just say, so and so, like for example, Claudia needs this?

S4: I would just dream it and he would just tell me.

CH: Do you ever see him in your dreams?

S4: A couple of times but he's never physical. He's never flesh and bones. He's a stone figure, a wooden figure and sometimes he's been cloud formations.

CH: What about Red Skin, have you ever had an image of him?

S4: I've seen him a couple of times.

CH: What does he look like?

S4: One time he had no hair at all and he had his face and bald head painted in different colors, they were kind of camouflage but at the same time they weren't cuz they had certain images or drawings of certain figures. And other times he had long hair midway to his back and it wasn't braided, it was loose, it wasn't held by braids or anything. And he didn't have any feathers on his headdress or anything. I've never seen him with his shirt on, he's always had either pants or he's had on, they look like shorts, but they're not really shorts. And he's never had shoes either; he's always been barefoot. And he always has a weapon in his hands, whether it's a bow and arrow, an axe or a knife.

CH: And Seven Feathers is pretty much just a hieroglyph or in some form of wood or stone.

S4: Right, I've seen him, or in a cloud formation.

CH: Did Seven Feathers say anything about his birth or his death?

S4: No, just that he was always a healer and that he died very old. That he was a healer. He would always say that 80% or 90% of people he dealt with or things that he would do were always herbal, herbal medicine, herbal remedies.

CH: Of the other Indian spirits that you talk about, which ones do you use? I think we talked about seven of them, I only wrote down about five of them.

S4: Usually what you do is that you call upon, if you're doing something for someone, you call upon all their names to pretty much get seven names, at least. We call them the seven Indian powers just like you would use the seven African powers, we would use the seven Indian powers.

CH: And do they ever all come?

S4: I haven't heard of all of them in one session descending on people.

CH: What about the Seven African spirits, who are they?

S4: The African spirits that would be Ochun, Yemaya, Shango, Eleggua, Obatala, Oggun.

CH: But those are not the ones that you use for healing, or are they?

S4: I would use them, but separately, not all at once, whereas, Indian spirits you can call seven at a different time because since they're all Indian, they're all of the same race, basically, they stick together or they're always inclined to work with each other for the same purpose, as long as it's a positive spell, it's a positive thing, never a negative situation.

CH: Last time you talked to me about African spirits that you use and you said that you use at least two of them primarily: Mama Francisca and Francisco Siete Rayos.

S4: Right.

CH: Could you tell me a little bit about their bio information?

S4: Francisco Siete Rayos and Mama Francisca, from what I understand, are not saints themselves like in Santeria. What they are is the equivalent of Santos in Santeria, but they're more into Palo Mayombe. And we believe that Mama Francisca was once herself a living person that was a santera and a palera and her saint was Yemaya; only she would work more the aspect of Palo Mayombe then Santeria. When you work with Mama Francisca you're actually working with Yemaya, but in her aspect of Palo, which is "Madre de Agua." It's like when you see Catholic saints, for example Santa Teresita de Jesus, who's name de Jesus meaning not that she's married and her married name is Jesus, but because of Jesus; her devotion to Jesus. There are all sorts of Catholic saints that have a second name attached to them meaning for Saint Francis, Jesus Christ, for different saints.

CH: It's kind of like when sometimes I've met people in the Santeria religion and they say: "Oh, did you meet Lazaro Ochun" or so and so

S4: Right, it would be the same situation only that

CH: meaning that that's their mother and father in the religion.

S4: Right, right. And they would channel their powers very closely, very dramatically.

CH: So, how would you call upon them for assistance?

S4: They prefer singing a lot, even if its just you that's singing, they prefer singing a lot. They all have their little songs that most people that are into Santeria will know. [They'll know] the song to Francisco Siete Rayos, they'll know the song to Mama Francisca, "Te estoy llamando," stuff like that, they all have different songs. And you can call upon them in an altar, but usually if you just sit in a corner of a house [with] a little offering of rum, a cigar, a glass of water, any little small plate of any type of regular food and just get a stick and start tapping it on the ground and calling upon them and singing to them, usually you can feel their vibes. They usually manifest on an image like a stone, wood or just any ceramic image of a black woman. Her image can be of a baby doll with black skin, big dress and headdress. With him it's usually a thin black man.

CH: Do you have to have those kinds of images around you in order for them to be able to have something to manifest into?

S4: Usually they require that or they prefer to have something where they can just dwell in or have a cauldron, a Siete Rayos cauldron, and that's where they would also manifest or a Madre de Agua cauldron which is the same thing.

CH: And what are they used for?

S4: Very aggressive work. They'll work both good and bad.

CH: Can you give me an example of a good case that they might assist you with?

S4: Just anything, basically. It can be a love spell, it can be a protection ceremony, it can be a cleansing ceremony, a giving a person open road to a better job, to just luck and anything really, any matter, legal matter, health.

CH: Is it easier to channel the African spirits then the Indigenous spirits, or does it make no difference?

S4: Usually African spirits are more into channeling. Indian spirits at times will be just very isolated, they'll just go away and disappear and usually you don't hear from them unless you're really calling them into coming into the earth. African spirits are more into material offerings such as food and cigars and rum and sometimes blood of certain poultry animals. Usually, they're more inclined into our level, our dimension. They're spirits that actually dwell the earth, not spirits that have actually descended like Indian spirits that were always into aspiring to a higher level of spirituality. They [the African spirits] were more into the every day things of life.

CH: Have you worked with Francisco Siete Rayos and Mama Francisca this year?

S4: Yes, many times.

CH: Many times, okay. So, they're more active?

S4: Usually, because they're more terrestrial; they're more into, again, usually you can give them food and even offerings of poultry. Usually they don't ask for that and they don't need it either. Usually what they need is just the lit candle, the praying and the glass of water, and the flowers, and even sometimes, herbs. Whereas these other spirits require food and a bunch of beverages and more attention like if they were actually living people. They're more our dimension; more into materializing themselves into almost human beings.

CH: Do they ever enter you?

S4: They've gone through me.

CH: How did you find out about Francisco Siete Rayos?

S4: We were in a, it wasn't a session, it was an initiation into Palo, where someone was gonna be initiated into Palo, and the cauldron where we were working on was actually a Siete Rayos cauldron. What we believe is that Francisco Siete Rayos has, some type of, not power, but administrative supervision [over] these types of cauldrons cuz they're made with him or in his name. So, he's always around them and that's when I channeled him, but we weren't asking for anyone to channel anything. We were just doing the ceremony. But because of the offerings of the roosters and everything, somehow that energy was just there.

CH: It brought him out.

S4: Right.

CH: So, he could have entered anyone else but he chose you.

S4: Right, cuz my perception is different from other people's. Usually my body is very, very relaxed, muscles and just everything. I'm more prone to have these things happen to me then other people. Other people have, for example, physical signs where you can tell that they're not mediums; they'll always have tension in the back of their head and their shoulders, and they feel tense.

CH: You're relaxed.

S4: And that's how spirits actually have access to you by not having someone be tense.

CH: What about Mama Francisca, how did you meet her?

S4: With her, in a spiritual session; a séance. We weren't channeling anyone in particular, but she descended on me.

CH: Do you ever remember how it is that they descend on you? Are you conscious at all?

S4: I always know when they descend on you because you do have a physical feeling of what's happening. You do lose consciousness 90% of the time, and 10% of the time you don't lose conscience. When you do lose conscience what you feel, when that is descending on you, is you feel like when the airplane is landing or lifting in the air, you have a sensation of being like on a roller coaster and the ride has just plunged you down so many feet and you have that feel of a tight chest and of uneasiness and also the sensation of fainting, passing out. And once you actually go there then that's when you forget actually, and you also lose the notion of time. It could have been eight hours or two minutes and you actually don't know how long that was. You couldn't recall exactly

how long you were out of it. In that 10% of the time where you don't lose consciousness you can hear things but you can't see anything. You have no control of saying, "I'm here" or "I can hear what you're saying." You can't speak; you can't physically do anything. All you can do is hear.

CH: How does it feel afterwards? Like when they're out of your body?

S4: It depends on the spirit and what they've done. In my case, I feel normal right away and with other people they feel light-headed, other people very weak. Some people feel very, very sleepy, very drained in their energies. I usually don't get anything. It's only been a couple of times when I felt dizzy or light headed and that's because they channeled through me, I guess, six hours in a row. So, that kind of was like a bit of a long time and they did so much work in those three hours they were like, for example, cleaning like thirty to forty people within that time frame, so, I'm guessing that has some affect on the physical.

CH: I would think so. I've seen a misa where afterwards the woman who received the spirit was really tired, maybe a little irritable. But, I've also noticed, like when I've gone to toques and people are dancing, some people they might catch a spirit but they try not to let that happen to them. Is it scary? Why would they not want that to happen or why would they want it to happen?

S4: I've never really done that where I've kept myself from having anything happen cuz usually I feel that I've no control over it cuz my philosophy is that if that spirit is actually gonna channel through you he'll do it anywhere he wants.

CH: There was one time when I was invoking one of these spirits--it wasn't any of the spirits I mentioned to you, but it was an Indian spirit--and the person cancelled. We had everything ready for him; we had his flowers in the altar, we had the incense going, we had the chairs aligned, we just had everything and she cancelled, she couldn't make it, it was a long drive for her from San Francisco to LA. She cancelled, said she was really sorry. So we just left everything there--the chairs, the flowers, the candles and the incense. I was invited to go to Buena Park [to a] dinner show, a Western show. It was called Wild Bill's. And so I didn't know that they had an American Indian show as part of the whole show. We were eating and when they started to dance I was just looking at them and at the same time was busy eating. In one of those instances, I pushed the table away from me, along with the food and everything and jumped up on the chair and stood on the chair and I kept on turning in different ways and then the people that were with me kind of brought me down from the chair and threw water on my face and I guess that somehow warned away what was gonna happen. But it was one particular song that they had started. When I approached and asked them what was that song--most people didn't notice and they [the restaurant attendants] didn't want to interrupt the show cuz of what I had done, they just thought it a small disturbance. We weren't at the front of the stage anyway, we were to a side--and they mentioned that it was a calling of the Indian spirits, cuz American Indians had different songs for different things; calling rain, calling for crops to grow, a war song, and that song that they had sung was a calling of Indians, they

were calling many tribes to unite, so, it kinda like called it [the spirit] and you didn't even know what they were actually singing or saying. And, again, that was a public place that had nothing to do with a séance or anything. It was just the environment and the fact that all the dancers were Indian, the fact that the music was appropriate--it was live, it wasn't taped, it was singing alive, in a live way. So that brought something to happen and again it was also that I had the session waiting. I guess the spirit was impatiently waiting to channel and he was stood up.

CH: Do you remember what Indian spirit that was?

S4: Yeah, that's this Indian that I have called Black Hawk.

CH: Black Hawk. And who is Black Hawk?

S4: We have very little information from him cuz' the only times that he's actually channeled he's somewhat incoherent. He drinks a lot, but he does solve issues; issues that even I think wont have any solution cuz they're, for example, that time he had to have somebody reverse a INS judge's decision to deport someone, and he actually did reverse the decision. This one spirit has that ability but he'll rarely channel and rarely show any interest of helping people. He's more of a type of renegade. We just know that he's very young. We just know he's very young and his name is Black Hawk.

CH: How did you come to know about him? Did you know about him before that one evening?

S4: It was one of these other spirits that talked about him when he was asked to do work for someone, he said that he couldn't help that person and he said that he would call upon this other spirit to do that work for him and when he left, he let this other spirit in. He left the body and at the same time gave permission or called upon this other Indian to descend. So, one left and the other one came.

CH: Which one was it that left?

S4: It was Indio Siete Rayas, Seven Lines.

CH: So, not Siete Plumas?

S4: No.

CH: Do you work with Indio Siete Rayas often?

S4: He's more of a clairvoyant so usually he'll descend in me when I'm in a session trying to see things with people. At first, he'll just give me information in my mind about people and when I least expect it he'll be the one basically saying, "you're not using the right words" or "you're not giving my message correctly" and that's usually when he

comes through me. He'll use his own words and his own adjectives and his own tone of voice and his own way of saying things.

CH: Are there any types of offerings that you can give to the Indian spirits?

S4: Usually it's seven fruits, seven types of fruits in a basket or in a plate, seven different colored candles, wild flowers, different types of grains, seven types of grains, dried meat like certain beef jerky. For some reason number seven goes with them, that's the number of things we always offer them.

CH: Do you offer it to all seven of them or seven of those things to each individual?

S4: Usually seven to different individuals or to all seven of them depending on who you wanna give the offerings to and there's usually music too. They're into hearing music that's wind music and sometimes drum, depending on the spirit. Usually, warrior spirits will ask for drum music and passive healers will ask for wind instruments.

CH: So, we've talked about four Indian spirits, do you know the names of other remaining spirits that you use?

S4: There's this one female Indian, her name is, I guess translated into English would be, Wildflower, India Flor Silvestre. She's very maternal and into issues of love, issues that have to do with love, family unity, maternal issues, children's issues, and things that have to do with being a maternal person.

CH: How did you find out about her?

S4: I've never channeled her, I've just seen her a whole lot. I've seen her a whole lot and I've had other mediums and spiritualists tell me about her as being part of my spiritual commission.

CH: So, you haven't ever really worked with her?

S4: I've worked with her but I haven't really channeled her, I haven't dreamt her, I've just seen her in water, I've seen her in glasses of water. I always see that this woman sometimes will be young; sometimes she'll be older. She's a thin built woman. She's either playing with children or on a rock by the river and she's always doing things with flowers and honey and bees and just cooking.

CH: Is she popular among espiritistas?

S4: I never heard of her. I never heard of anyone else tell me about her.

CH: What else can you tell me about Siete Rayos? Does he have a biography?

S4: No, not actually. We don't really know if he's Latin or North American or Central American. Usually the one's that we do know their biographies are Indians that a lot of people work with. There's this one Mayan Indian, his name is Juan de Chamula or John of Chamula. There is this region of Chiapas in Guatemala, there's this region of typical rainforest and there's this whole mountainous area called Chamula and that's where he's from. He's an indigenous Indian [that] couldn't be more than 200 years old because when we've seen him in water he's never dressed with any typical headdress, he's just dressed [in] all white linen type clothes that they would make out of kind of like hemp fiber, but from a different plant and he would lways wear a hat like if he was working in the field and he would wear either the red handkerchief around his neck or a red handkerchief around his waist. And he had a machete usually, meaning that he was always barefooted and he was always working and he was short built and thin and dark skinned.

CH: Sounds kind of like Juan Diego.

S4: Right, someone like that. But I've seen him [when] other other people channel him and he'll always cover his eyes, like very bashful and very humble and he would laugh a lot. He was speaking Spanish [and used] different words that weren't common for us.

CH: Like maybe hybrid words?

S4: Right.

CH: Do you work with him? Or have you worked with him?

S4: We've used him a whole lot but usually it's just for protection cuz we know he's a very good spirit and I know he helps people with work cuz' he himself was a farmer, so issues that deal with work.

CH: Does he mostly help men or women or children?

S4: He has a preference for women because supposedly he was very much fond of women. He [is] usually more inclined to help women but as any other good spirit he wouldn't really distinguish between men and women, he would just help.

CH: And how do you call upon him for his help?

S4: We would just have a simple setting of a white handkerchief, a glass of water and a white candle. That's just basically how pure he was.

CH: Is there a particular significance about the red handkerchief that he wore?

S4: That's how we get an idea of how old he was, that he wasn't very old because these beliefs of wearing red on the body were not that old. The idea is to protect yourself from something bad: envy, witchcraft, danger.

There's this other spirit from Central America, he's either from El Salvador or from Honduras. I'm more inclined to believe that he's from El Salvador. He was also indigenous and his name was Julio Cañas y Cañas.

CH: Julio Canas y Canas?

S4: No, Cañas, like sugar cane.

CH: Cañas y Cañas. How did you find out about him?

S4: There's literature on him, there's prayers on him. Again, he was also more into healing [and] more into health issues and helping people rid themselves of evil things: witchcraft, ailments, sicknesses.

CH: Do you use him?

S4: I've used him in the past a couple of times and he did actually work.

CH: Do you remember a particular case?

S4: It was health issues; people that had problems not being able to conceive; people that had problems with high blood sugar, stuff like that; people that weren't responding to traditional medicine. Once they started invoking him and asking for his intervention the conventional medicine that wasn't helping them actually began to help and their blood sugar was normal again and things started to heal. So, they felt that it was his intervention that actually made these treatments actually benefit them in some way whereas before they had no benefit.

CH: I see, and he was also indigenous?

S4: Indigenous, yes. El Salvador. The thing with him was that he would always wear a suit and tie so you have the feeling and idea that he wasn't much of a province person or when that only photo, cuz there's just one photograph of him, so we imagined that maybe he was just dressing up for that particular picture. It's a black and white photograph so he's definitely from the 20th century. We're thinking 1940's and beyond. I haven't seen him channel through anyone but I just heard from people from El Salvador that have seen him in spiritual sessions. He's always been a guide of guides. He would present himself in, let's say a temple or spiritual center, and he would try to organize them and tell the head of the center, "well, do his now, do that now, don't do this, don't do that." [He's] pretty much like, let's say, a health inspector coming to your restaurant and telling you what to do and what not to do and then just leaving and having all the authority in the world to do so.

CH: So, he just does that with other guides?

S4: We call him guide of guides cuz he'll actually come in and say what was right and what was wrong.

CH: I see. The times that you have called upon him , what has been your way of calling him?

S4: Just basically reading cuz he has this prayer that he himself had written. It does mention him but it mostly looks like if it were a Christian prayer. It doesn't refer to saints, virgins or anything. It just basically refers to God and prophets. It'll mention him very little but at the same time it mentions asking God for certain light or certain strength; just basically on God and different prophets.

CH: So those are about seven indigenous spirits, do you know of any others?

S4: They're just many, I mean we just mentioned one female spirit so far, [but] there's a second female spirit. She's the only spirit in the world that has her own monument. She's from Venezuela, her name is Maria Lionsa.

CH: I've heard a little bit-

S4: She in Caracas, which is the capital of Venezuela, has her own monument. It's just a huge bronze statue and it's a national monument to her. The traffic actually circulates around her so she's like in this island in the middle of intersections and her monument's right in the dead center. Traffic actually circulates around her. She's that big of an image, of a statue.

CH: And she's an indigenous spirit?

S4: She's an indigenous; she's actually Indian and what most people call mestiza, both Spanish and indigenous from Amazonic tribes.

CH: Have you ever worked with her?

S4: I've worked with her. She was like one of the first that I worked with in the past because she was actually somewhat commercialized. I actually, at first, was somewhat skeptical cuz I barely had read anything on her, I just knew that such and such person had used it and their work had gone well so I tried it myself and she actually did come through with work.

CH: What type of things did she do?

S4: It was a love spell that she had to resolve for someone. She was known [as] somewhat of a wonder woman of her age because she was kind of like a , how would you say, like a rebel. She was more of a revolutionary person in her time. I know she was against government, against oppression of indigenous cultures and people. I knew that her father was a very influential governmental figure, a Spanish man. Her mother was

the person that had raised her, that taught her how to be more of the aspects of indigenous culture, of being humble, of being close to nature, respecting nature, stuff like that. She actually was involved in many civil disturbances and guerilla war against the Spaniards in her time for precisely the oppression against people.

CH: So she was an actual person?

S4: Right, that existed and had caused her own share of mischief and trouble against the Spaniard colonialism even though it was in her blood.

CH: Do you know how she died?

S4: I knew she was killed by the government in one of these raids or little battles that they always had against each other. In Venezuela there's like this mountainous region where she channels through many people that are there. She has her own region that's actually called Mount Maria Lionsa or something like that. People go up that mountain to see the mediums that are working there in her behalf and I know that it's all by donation, they actually don't charge anything and if they need anything to work with you they'll ask you to bring it with you or you'll go back down the mountain and you'll get what ever they need to help you with the cleaning or the spell or what ever. They'll just help you. They channel the spirit and she just consults you, cleans you and just helps you with whatever matters that you need to be helped with.

CH: What about you, how do you call her?

S4: When I've used her, she has her own prayers, her own set of literature.

CH: So you read this in a book?

S4: I memorized it. They were short prayers. With her it's just having a glass of water with five stones int it-five small round stones-a smaller glass with some type of white liquor-spirit liquor-a cigar and a candle cuz she actually did herself smoke and drank, it was part of her indigenous culture.

CH: So, these are things that please her?

S4: Right, and draws her to you on that moment. And she's very much into women's issues, women's issues; against women's oppression just all these issues that have to do with women. Usually that's when I call upon [her]. Like when I have a woman that has all these matters around her, like not a very strong woman in a sense that she can [not] just defy men's authority or her husband's authority or [she's] a victim of all these other things that can happen. Usually what Maria Lionsa does is gives them strength, somewhat like Joan of Arc would do in the Catholic setting for women.

CH: Would you call upon her in the presence of the person, the customer who that would be for?

S4: I would tell them what to do to in their home to invite her in and help her with problems and in my home or here at the store I would use her in a different way, but I never channeled her so I really couldn't use her. I don't have that confidence in knowing that she would actually channel.

CH: Does she mostly get channeled into women?

S4: I've seen a TV documentary where she did channel through both a man and a woman in different days so I don't think she has a preference. I just know that when she did channel through a man, they had to dress him in her clothing, in her long skirts or just using her Indian jewelry so I just know that she's somewhat materialistic also, meaning that there are spirits that'll channel and they're so elevated that they'll even change your voice.
If you're female and he's male, you will automatically become a male voice and he will ask for anything to drink or smoke. He'll just say what he's gotta say and ask you to pray. I know with her she's more [like] African spirits. She's more materialistic and is on our level. [She] asks for a lot of offerings.

CH: Now the spirits that you mostly use are Red Skin Indian and Indian Seven Feathers.

S4: Basically. There's a number of them but they're rarely used, they're more ceremonial, used for their names, like calling upon their power. You can use Fast Arrow [or] Flecha Veloz, Black Knife [or] Cuchillo Negro [and] Seven Arrows [or] Indio Siete Flechas.

CH: So, those you don't use as often?

S4: No, we just use their names. At one point in time you actually did use them but there's certain spirits that are temporarily there, they'll come in, they'll help you and at certain times they'll leave. They'll complete their mission and you just don't feel them anymore.